



PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA for April 13th 2021

This meeting will be held in a hybrid format both in-person and via Zoom. The meeting will take place in Council Chambers, City Hall, 2039 Sycamore Avenue. Participants must wear masks and practice social distancing. Two-way communication will be provided via Zoom for Planning Commission members and the public.

Zoom call details:

Time: Tuesday April 13th 2021 7:00 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87332037295>

Meeting ID: **873 3203 7295**

(646) 558-8656

AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING

Conditional Use Permit for 245 W 21st Street covering the following uses:

- a) 614.04-2 Beverage or food processing plants
- b) 614.04-8 Multifamily homes, apartments, or efficiencies located on the story of a building closest to the street level, when the building is mixed-use; or located in a single-use building;
- c) 614.04-17 Small-scale production establishments, with tools, goods, repairs, services, equipment, and supplies in a permanent enclosed structure.

REGULAR MEETING

Call to Order by Chairman and Roll Call

Public Comment

Review and Adoption of Minutes

Minutes of February 9th meeting

Report of Secretary

New Business

- 1) Conditional Use Permits for 245 W 21st St

Adjournment

Members and Term Expirations

Dennis Hawes, Chairman, 7/31/2024

Mike Ohleger, Vice-Chairman, 6/30/2022

Sandy Burke, 8/31/2021

Marolyn Cash, 6/30/2024

Lucy Ferrebee, 9/30/2023

Melvin Henson, City Council Representative,
9/30/2023

Kristie Gibbons, 12/31/2024

Timothy Petrie, 12/31/2024

Jason Tyree, Ex Officio member

Staff

Tom Roberts, Director of Community & Economic Development

City Hall, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, Buena Vista VA 24416

(540) 261-8607 | troberts@bvcity.org | buenvistava.org/planning

Meetings

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission meet in Council Chambers, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, unless otherwise announced. Meetings may be held and business conducted without a quorum, but no votes may be taken unless a quorum is present. A majority of members constitutes a quorum. A motion passes with a majority vote; a tie constitutes defeat of the motion.



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES of February 9th 2021

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission met in Council Chambers and via Zoom at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, February 9th 2021.

Members Present:

Dennis Hawes, Chairman
Michael Ohleger, Vice-Chairman
Marolyn Cash
Lucy Ferrebee
Kristie Gibbons
Melvin Henson, City Council Representative

Members Absent:

Sandy Burke
Timothy Petrie
Jay Scudder, Ex Officio member

Staff Present:

Tom Roberts, Director of Community & Economic Development

Meeting is called into order and roll was called. Mr. Roberts introduced Kristie Gibbons as the newest member of the Planning Commission, appointed February 4th.

Minutes

Mr. Henson moved to adopt the minutes of January 12th, 2021 as presented. Mrs. Cash seconded, Mrs. Ferrebee abstained because she was absent, and all voted yes.

PUBLIC HEARING

Conditional Use Permit for efficiency apartments on the first floor of 2175 Magnolia Avenue.

Mr. Hawes introduced the proposal as residential use in the rear and commercial space in the front. Then Mr. Tyson Cooper, applicant, spoke and summarized the project. Mr. Cooper stated that his intent is to help revitalize downtown by rehabbing a building by putting his own money out there to do something in the community. He went on to describe the office and commercial spaces shown on the floor plan.

Mr. Henson asked their timeline, and Mr. Cooper replied the building could be ready by June 2021. Mr. Henson also pointed out that it was good that he had two exit doors from each apartment.

Mr. Hawes asked about the courtyard next to him, and Mr. Cooper said that developing that courtyard as open green space is phase two once he has finished the building, and that he has already begun speaking with the owner of the building on the other side about ideas.

Mr. Roberts clarified that only the space shown on the floor plan could be used as apartments, and not the rest of the building, without getting another conditional use permit.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Hawes closed the public hearing. Mrs. Cash motioned to recommend approval of the project as presented, Mrs. Ferree seconded, and all voted yes.

Mr. Roberts briefly summarized that the regulations around first-floor apartments in the Mixed Use zone had been updated several years ago.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Roberts explained that the downtown plan is complete and there will be a presentation to Council and the public about the plan on February 18th. The next step is application for the Community Improvement Grant (CIG) which will primarily fund construction of improvements downtown.

Adjournment 7:30 PM

Approved: _____



PLANNING COMMISSION Staff Report

Conditional Use Permit

245 W 21st St

4/7/2021

Synopsis

Applicant The Advancement Foundation proposes a mixed-use agricultural technology innovation center to include small-scale production and apartment housing. Certain uses require conditional use permits.

Site Information

Address/Tax Map:	26-1---C, 245 W 21 st St	
Existing zoning:	Mixed Use (MU)	
Existing land use:	Vacant industrial building	
Proposed zoning:	Mixed Use (MU) with CUPs	
Proposed land use:	Mixed-use ag tech center	
Surrounding zoning and land use:		
North: ADS (Advanced Drainage Systems) industrial use East: Railroad; mixed commercial uses on 200 block of W 21 st St South: Riverwalk park land West: Riverwalk park land		
Size:	3.5 acres	
Staff Recommendation:	Approve	
Tentative Timeline	Preliminary Commission Discussion	n/a
	Planning Commission Public Hearing	4/13/2021
	City Council Public Hearing	5/6/2021
	City Council Adoption	5/20/2021

Overview

Background and Proposal

The Advancement Foundation (TAF) proposes to renovate the former Mundet-Hermetite facility into an ag-tech innovation center, to include business incubation, entrepreneurial support, research and development, small-scale production of food/beverage and other types of products, a public café, and apartment housing. The center will be a regional hub for translating new technologies into products and businesses, with a focus on agriculture-related industries but open to all lines of business.

TAF is a nonprofit based in Vinton, Virginia established in 2007 to, “execute key strategies that provide infrastructure, support, and resources to create an effective entrepreneurial ecosystem.” TAF operates an Innovation Center in Vinton which is similar to the proposed ag-tech center in Buena Vista, but on a much smaller scale. TAF also runs The Gauntlet, the largest business training/launch program in Virginia, which has included the Rockbridge region for the last two years.

This packet includes a presentation with an overview of the proposal. TAF and the City are working with several state agencies on funding for this project, primarily Virginia Housing and the Department of Housing and Community Development. State officials are excited about the possibilities of this center and are supportive of funding the project. TAF is also collaborating with Dabney Lancaster Community College and the Staunton Creative Community Foundation on programming of the business incubator component.

Zoning

In 2020, 3.5 acres of the approximately 6 acre parcel owned by Mundet Corporation was rezoned from Light Manufacturing to Mixed Use at the request of Gavin Fox. Fox proposed a business incubator in the facility which would include retail, recreation, and restaurant components, so MU was determined the best fit. The rezoning included conditional use permits (CUPs) for small-scale production and for warehousing.

TAF’s proposal similarly includes customer-facing, educational, and restaurant uses appropriate for MU. It also includes housing on the main level of the facility (the building is all one story except for a small mezzanine in the production space). The following CUPs are requested:

- a) 614.04-2 Beverage or food processing plants
- b) 614.04-8 Multifamily homes, apartments, or efficiencies located on the story of a building closest to the street level, when the building is mixed-use; or located in a single-use building;
- c) 614.04-17 Small-scale production establishments, with tools, goods, repairs, services, equipment, and supplies in a permanent enclosed structure.

Comprehensive Plan Conformance

The Economic Development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan supports this mix of uses. Objective 5.1U “Identify incubator space for small businesses in the City of Buena Vista” and Objective 5.2A “Develop policies and incentives to stimulate redevelopment of older, vacant, or

blighted non-residential uses...” Further, Objective 4P of the Housing chapter is to facilitate the development of new downtown housing.

Additionally, adaptive reuse of this property for a mix of uses that would include housing and restaurant is supported by the 2021 Downtown Revitalization Plan. The plan notes the following about downtown housing:

Developers and other business leaders have looked at housing on upper stories in Downtown Buena Vista. In fact, some very attractive units were developed, while some sat on the drawing boards. There is still a market for downtown housing, and it tends to be lifestyle-based.

There are some people, usually young professionals or midlife career changers who like the idea of living in downtown housing—especially lofts. Upper stories in Downtown can easily accommodate additional apartments or condos and empty spaces on Magnolia Avenue can certainly accommodate housing.

A look at the housing market in Buena Vista does not call for standard housing units; again, downtown housing appeals to a vertical market who enjoy the amenities of downtown. It is our evaluation that 40 housing units Downtown can easily be absorbed.

Studies clearly indicate that multi-use downtowns have the greatest long-term chance to revitalize and have a mix of service, retail, professional office and housing.

Environmental Characteristics

As a former industrial facility, there are potential environmental contaminants that need to be investigated and possibly addressed. Mundet-Hermetite performed multiple environmental studies and testing over the years, and the City has some documentation of those assessments. The most recent were performed in 2014-2015. The City is currently working with TAF to secure grant funding (through DEQ and VEDP) to perform an updated environmental site assessment prior to closing on the property. Based on prior studies, there are no known major environmental problems on the site. There were some instances of elevated contaminants in soil and groundwater samples, and some staining on concrete inside and outside the building which may indicate contamination.

Because multiple components of the project will be funded by state and federal agencies, renovations will require compliance with applicable state and federal environmental regulations.

The site is immediately adjacent to the flood levee. The project is not expected to impact functioning of the levee system.

The site is fairly level and there are existing drainage ditches at the perimeter. The impervious surface area of buildings and/or parking lots is not proposed to increase at this time. As a result the project is not anticipated to impact stormwater management characteristics.

Housing

This proposal includes apartment housing. The housing is an integral part of the mixed-use innovation center because it helps to foster a 24/7 buzz of activity, and some of the units will be reserved for “entrepreneurs in residence” or visiting researchers or students. Additionally, the revenue stream from the housing makes the entire project (and TAF) more financially

sustainable in the long term. TAF is working with Virginia Housing to pilot a new Opportunity Zone financing program through which Virginia Housing will fund the entire purchase price of the property, freeing TAF to use other funding sources for buildout and programming. Thus the housing component is necessary to progress on the project.

Current conceptual plans call for ten one-bedroom loft apartments at the rear (river side) of the building. Each unit would be approximately 1,100 sf on two levels; the lower level would have living area, kitchen, and half bath and the upper mezzanine level would have the bedroom and a full bath. Each unit would have a balcony.

In March 2021 two studio apartments at the rear of 2175 Magnolia Avenue were approved by City Council by conditional use permit, after much discussion on whether they were appropriate. The primary reasons cited for concern with allowing first-floor residential at 2175 Magnolia were

- a) the opportunity cost of using first floor space downtown for residential rather than retail;
- b) whether there was adequate parking for new residential units downtown; and
- c) setting a precedent that may lead to creation of too many or inappropriate first-floor apartments downtown.

The proposed housing component of the ag-tech center is very different from the housing component of 2175 Magnolia Ave.

- The proposed layout is approximately 25% residential by gross square footage. The building is about 39,000 sf and the residential component of the first floor (including common hallways) is about 9,000 sf. While this space could be retained as production or research space, the building retains tens of thousands of square feet of production/research space, in addition to the office space. Further, the residential is an integral component of the overall function of the center.
- There is ample paved off-street parking surrounding the building. Because spaces are not marked it is hard to establish an exact number, but there is approximately 60,000 sf (1.3 acres) of asphalt parking around the building.
- In the MU zone and in downtown, this site is unique. It is at the termination of 21st Street and while it is connected to downtown, it is at the edge. The character of the building as a former factory is completely different from most of the downtown.
- The proposed housing will be a beneficial addition to the City's housing inventory. Currently there are few if any true loft apartments (split over two levels), especially not any on the river with spectacular views of Glen Maury Park and direct access to the River Walk.

The exactly layout and number of apartments may change as the design develops because this project is still in the early stages. The design presented is conceptual and not final; cost estimates have not been finalized and may necessitate changes. As such, staff propose the following details to this conditional use permit:

1. Housing may occupy no more than 30% of the square footage of the existing building
2. Housing will consist of between 8 and 20 apartments

3. No housing unit will be less than 320 square feet

Small Scale Production and Food and Beverage Production

Small scale production is defined thus:

Small-scale production establishment means an establishment where shared or individual tools, equipment, or machinery are used to make or grow products on a small scale, including the design, production, processing, printing, assembly, treatment, testing, repair, and packaging, as well as any incidental storage, retail or wholesale sales and distribution of such products. Typical small-scale production establishments include, but are not limited to, vertical farming or the making of electronics, food products, non-alcoholic beverages, prints, jewelry and clothing/apparel, metal work, furniture, glass, ceramics; together with accessory uses such as training or educational programs.

A CUP is needed for small-scale production that is not associated with a proportionate retail use. In the MU zone, retail paired with on-site production is permitted by right, but if you do not have a retail component, then you need a CUP. TAF does not have specific clients or tenants confirmed at this point, so we do not know the specifics of what will be produced, but it may include food and beverage products.

Typically applicants would be required to produce more details on what is to be produced, how much, what equipment would be used, etc. However, as a former manufacturing facility, both the building and the site are already set up for processing and production uses. For this reason staff is comfortable with a more “open-ended” CUP for small scale production and food and beverage production.

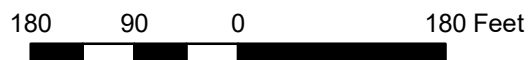
Recommendation


This project is a game-changing economic development prospect because its purpose is not just employing people to build something, but it is bringing together researchers and entrepreneurs to develop new companies which will grow, expand, and employ more people. This is referred to as “economic gardening.” The CUPs proposed are integral to the center becoming a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use hub. Staff recommends approval.



MU zoned portion of site

Any determination of topography or contours, or any depiction of physical improvements, property lines or boundaries is for general information only and shall not be used for the design, modification, or construction of improvements to real property or for flood plain determination.

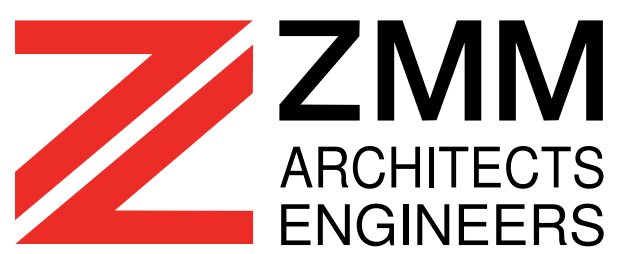




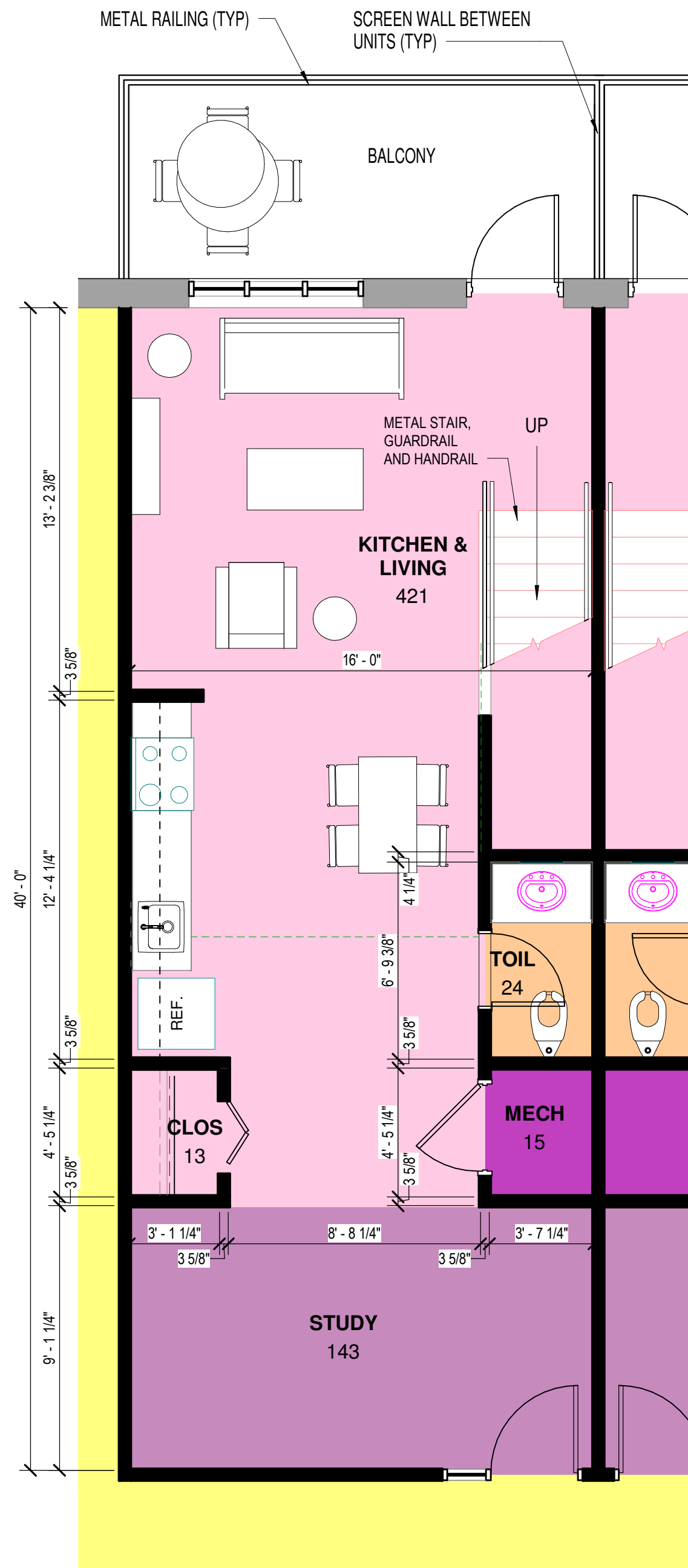
Adv. Foudation - Mundet Bldg Arch Rpt

BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA

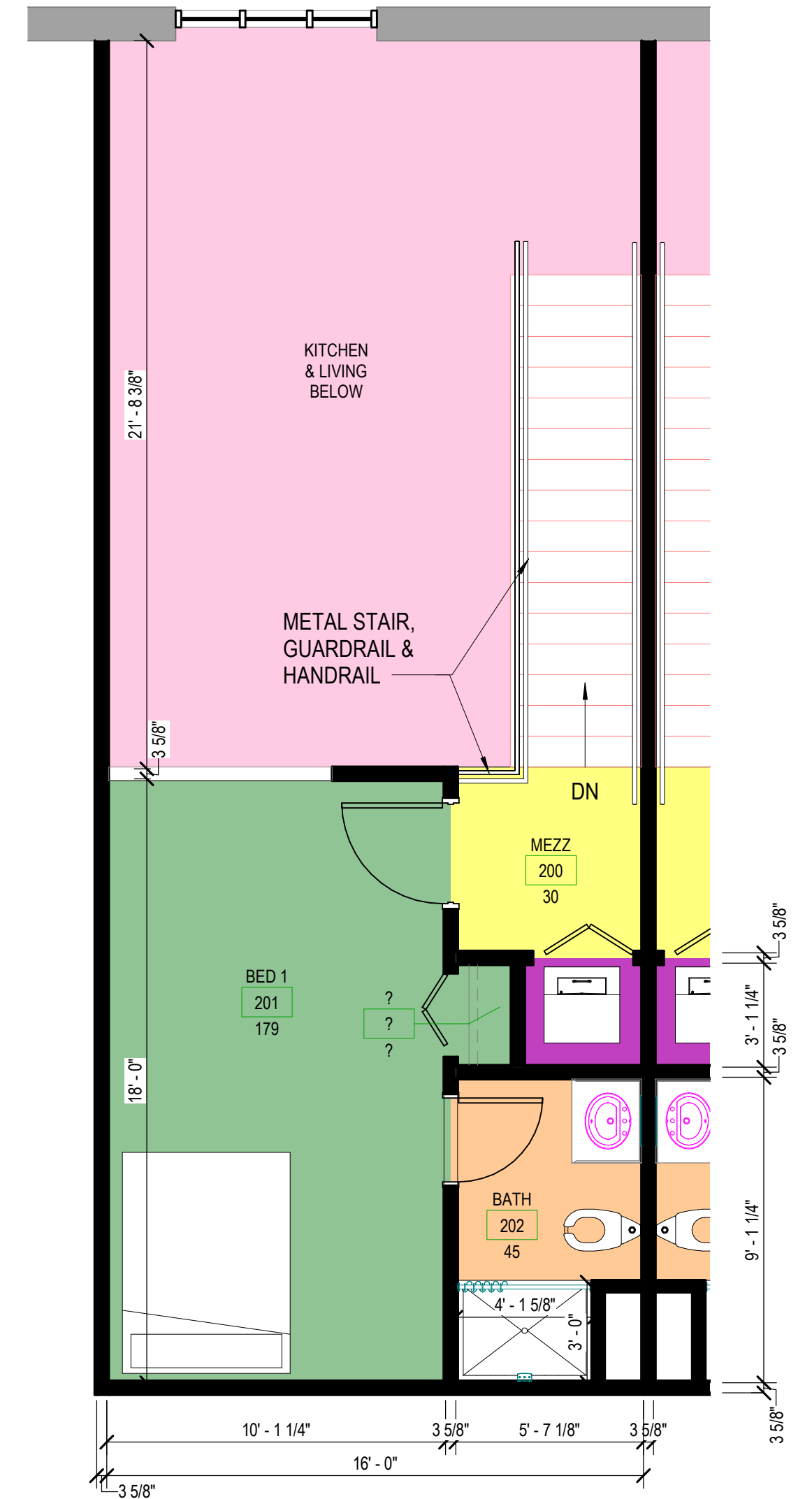
03/03/2021



UPPER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
NO SCALE



**TYPICAL UNIT
LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**

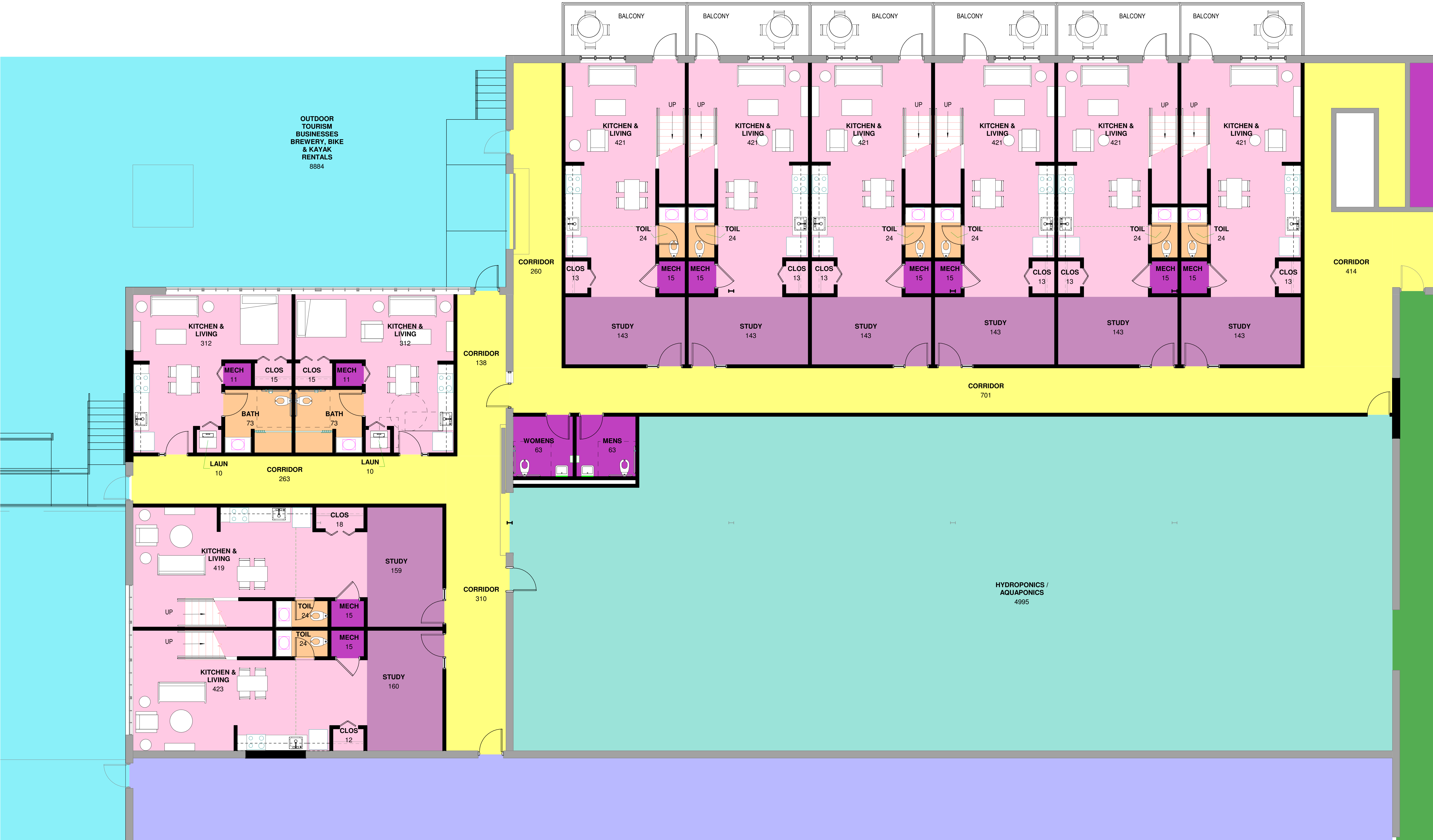
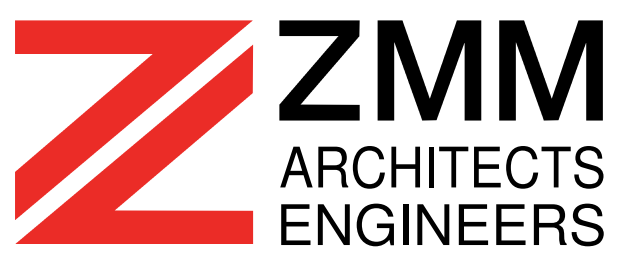


**TYPICAL UNIT
UPPER LEVEL PLAN**

Adv. Foudation - Mundet Bldg Arch Rpt

ENLARGED LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

03/02/21

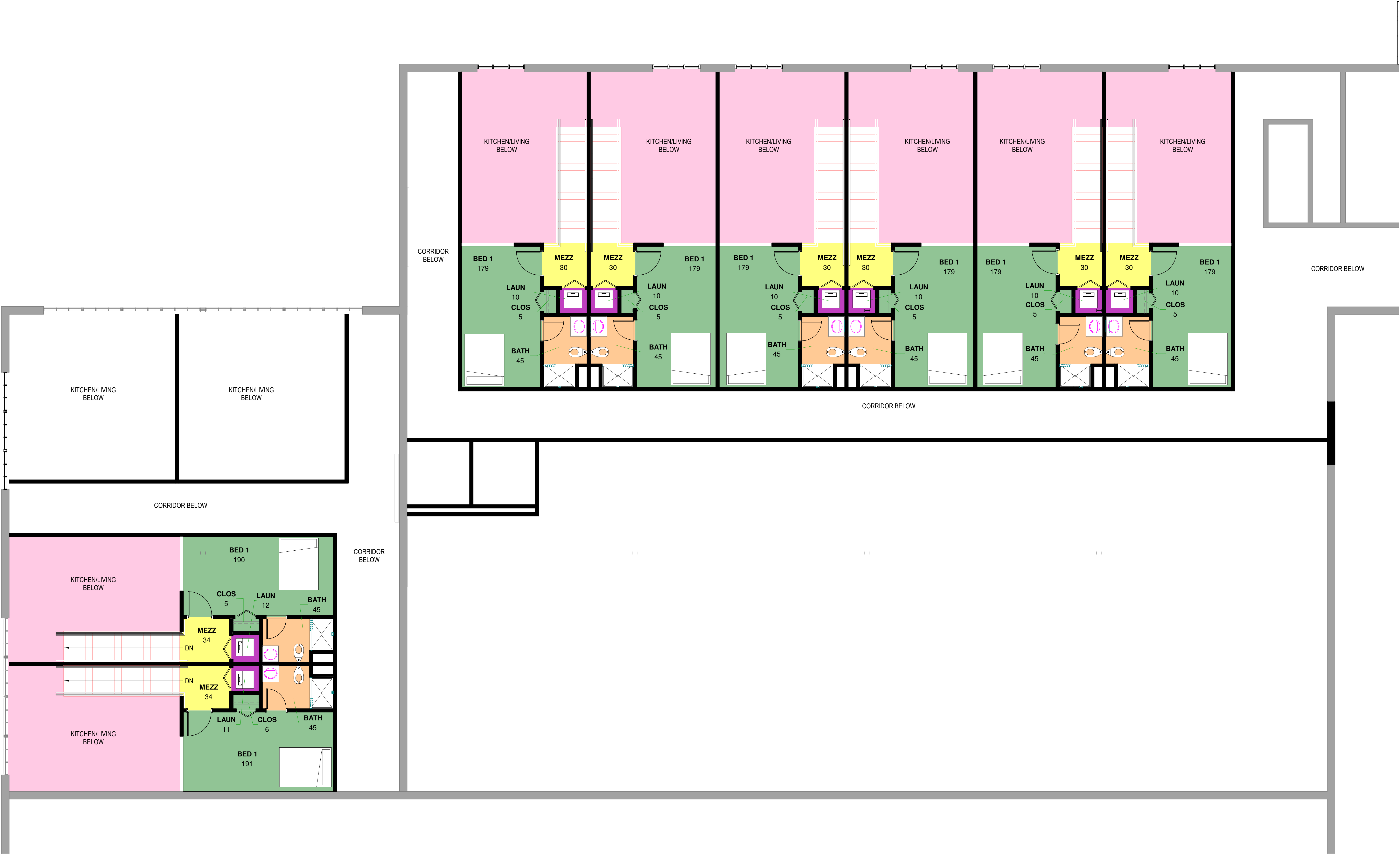
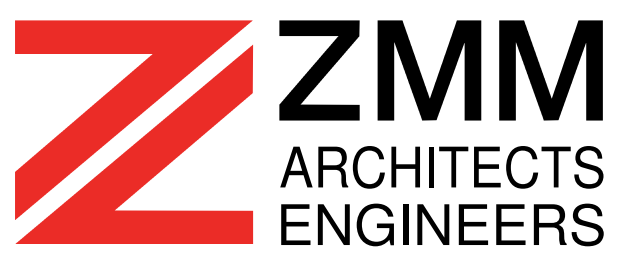


PARTIAL ENLARGED LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
NO SCALE

Adv. Foudation - Mundet Bldg Arch Rpt

ENLARGED UPPER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

03/03/21



PARTIAL ENLARGED UPPER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN
NO SCALE

The Advancement Foundation
Ag-Food Technology Business Development and Innovation Center
245 W 21st Street Buena Vista, VA



The Site Location is Ideally situated:

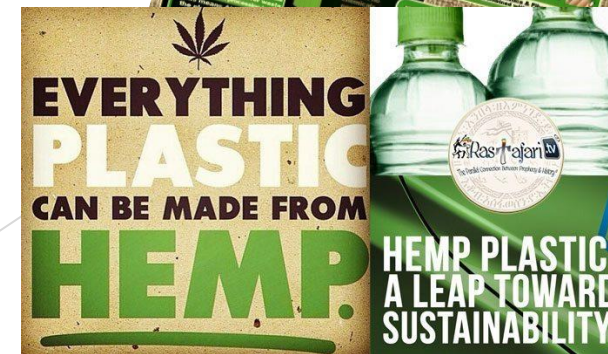
- 1. **Ag-Food technology** – Connect innovative entrepreneurs, farmers, value added product developers with tools, technologies and expertise to improve capacity, sustainability, efficiency and economic vitality in the Ag/Food industries. Examples might included: vertical farming/hydroponics, labs/testing, nutrition, material, new value added products, emerging technology, hemp seed and fiber, energy, construction materials, testing.
- 2. **Small Scale Manufacturing/Processing** – small scale manufacturing/processing, software share, packaging, regulations, labeling and supply chain development, management, guidelines, supply chain development, value added product development, Workforce Development
- 3. **Educational Center**- Share knowledge, Regenerative practice, Workforce Dev, Conference Space
- 4. **Business Incubation/Acceleration** – Encourage innovation, business planning and development, proof of concepts, product development, Mentor/expert Network, Capital resources, marketing support
- 5. **Community Development**- Vibrant and engaging community development, Mixed use - housing, outdoor recreation/tourism, Café, Small artisan center/mkt, worlds fair type exhibits of new/developing product, Enhanced walkability and connection

Key Partners & potential collaborators: Econ Dev, DSLCC, Workforce, JMU, W&L, SVU, ILAR, SCCF, VHDA, DHCD, GOVA, USDA



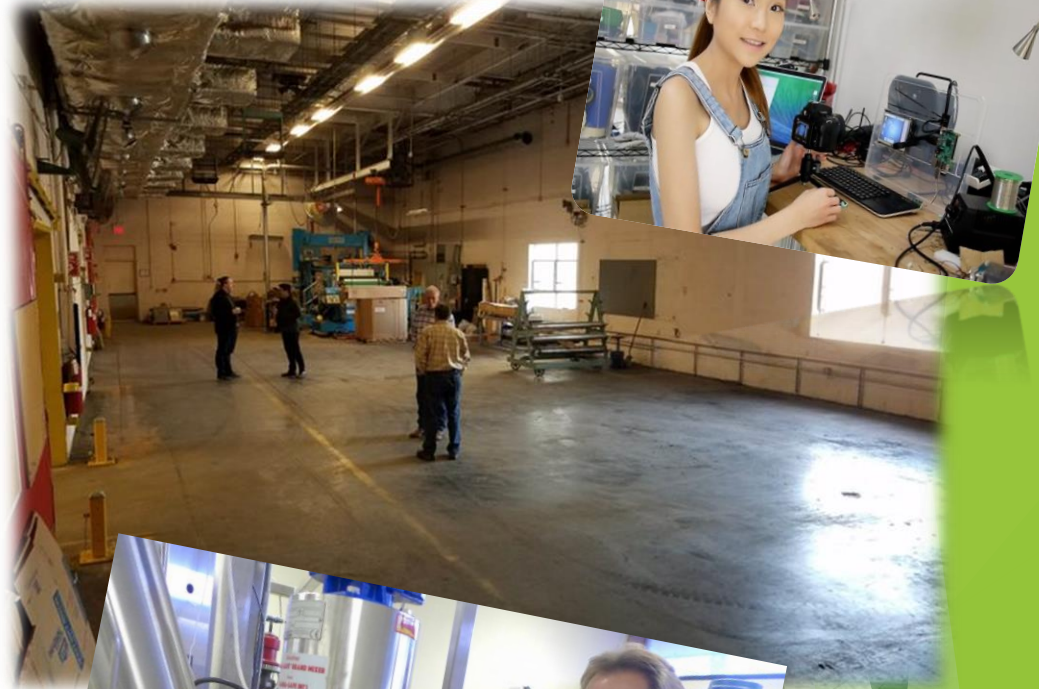
AG-Food Technology

Connecting Innovative entrepreneurs, farmers, value added product developers with tools, technologies and expertise to improve capacity, sustainability, efficiency and economic vitality in the Ag Food industries. Examples; vertical farming/hydroponics, lab/testing, nutrition, new value added products, hemp seed and fiber, energy, construction materials etc.



Small Scale Processing

Small scale manufacturing/processing, software share, flash freezing, hemp to hempcrete, bedding, packaging, regulations, labeling management, guidelines, supply chain development, value added product development, workforce development



Education Center

Share knowledge, Regenerative practice, Workforce Development, Conference Space, Virtual Connectivity, Focus groups.

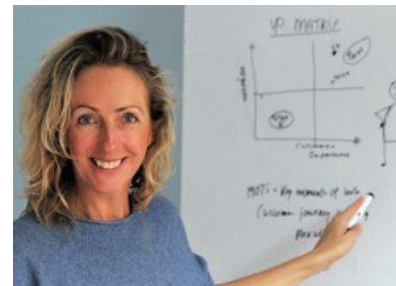


Business Incubation/Acceleration

Business Incubation/Acceleration, Proof of Concept, Business Planning, Mentor/Industry Expertise Network, Capital Resources



Ecosystem of Innovators, Students, Industry Experts, Educators, & Entrepreneurs



Community Development - Housing - Livable, Learning, Innovative Community - Industrial Loft apartments for long/short term living



Community Development Strategies - Gather

Coffee, CAFÉ, Marketplace, Outdoor Recreation, Revolving “World Fair” type exhibits



CAFÉ



Fresh Market



Agritourism - HEMP House Exhibit



Outdoor Recreation

STAGE = gross 100-0000
LAW = gross 100-0000

River Views

Outdoor Tourism

businesses; Tub, Bike & Kayak rentals

Market Place -
fresh foods,
artisan products
etc.

Patio Space

Industrial lofts, Guest Rooms for educators, visitors,
students, certification clients

Ag/Food Tech,
Hydroponics,
Product
Development

CAFÉ

Educational
Space – class
room, Virtual
Conf, Labs

Small Scale Processing

Business Accelerator/Incubator
(Meeting, Office, Technology)

CAFÉ

Downtown Buena Vista

Solar

On site access to the
Maury River

The ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION

Engineering Opportunities...

Map Key:

● Resources

Mentor Network
Community Investment Holding: grants, loan funds, etc.

● Programs

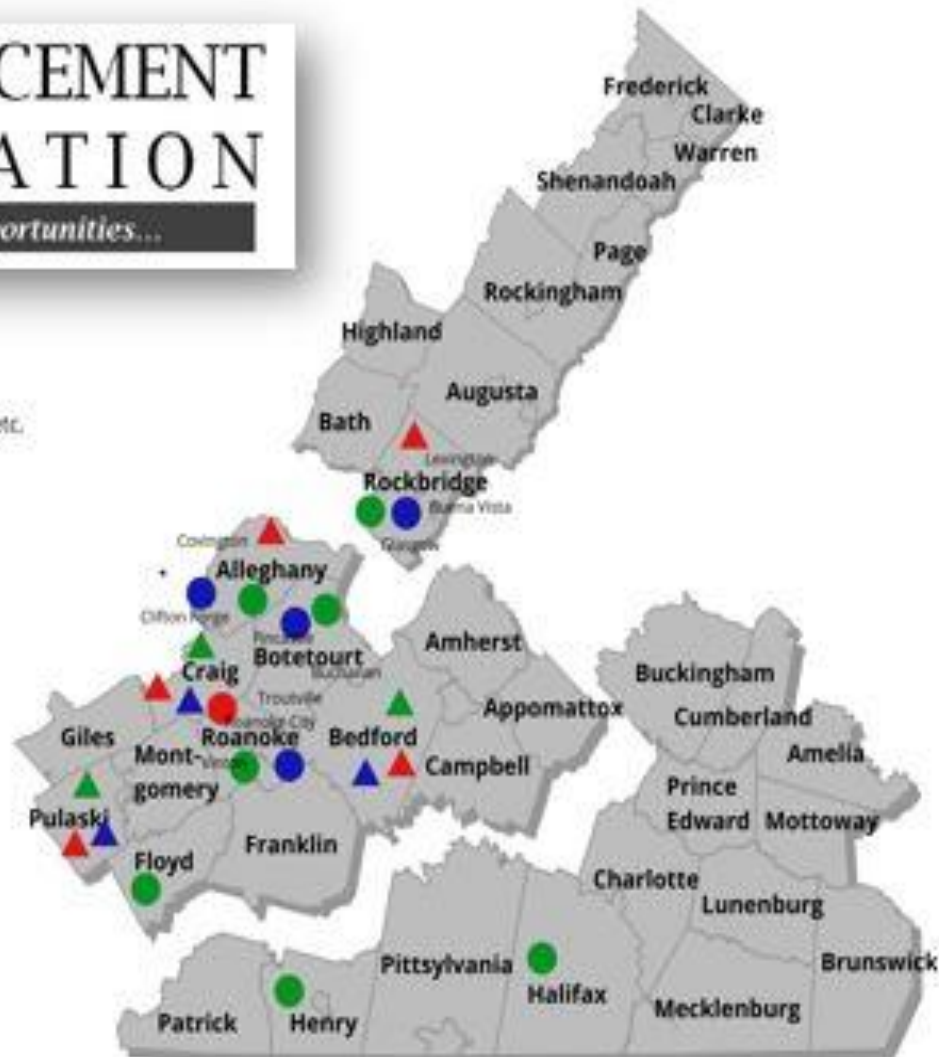
GAUNTLET Business Program and Competition™
Innovation Mill (early, high growth)
Virginia Individual Deposit Accounts (VIDA)

● Placemaking

Incubation Centers
Drone Zone
Maker's Space

Emerging Projects

- ▲ Resources
- ▲ Programs
- ▲ Placemaking



Photos and regions outlined by GO Virginia

The Advancement Foundation (501c3) 227 S Pollard St Vinton, VA 24179

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